DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 356 437 CG 024 832

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TITLE Teen-Age Dating Violence.
PUB DATE [91]
NOTE 31p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adolescents; *Dating (Social); Incidence; Interpersonal Relationship; School Role; Secondary Education; *Violence

ABSTRACT

It has been estimated that one out of three teenage girls will be involved in an abusive relationship or experience violence in their relationships. Given the fact that studies are showing higher incidence of dating violence reported among teenagers, the importance and usefulness of this topic for anyone who works with adolescents cannot be understated. School personnel (teachers, counselors, administrators) can play an important part in intervening and preventing dating violence. Educational professionals have a responsibility to be informed and to be ready to take an active role as they believe that schools must study this social issue. It is within the schools that students have the greatest opportunity to be exposed to alternative relationships and where they have access to support services. Incorporating dating violence into the discussion when it surfaces in the classroom, building it into the discussion when it surfaces in the classroom, building it into the curriculum, facilitating student awareness and support systems, promoting parental and community awareness and involvement; and cultivating and using an integrated curriculum are methods of becoming involved and helping students learn about healthy relationships. (ABL)

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ED356437

Teen-Age Dating Violence

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Running head: Teen-Age Dating Violence

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Abstract

This literature review discusses teenage dating violence. Abuse in relationships is defined and its prevalence is described. Factors associated with abusive relationships are identified. Guidelines for intervention and prevention are suggested.

Teen-Age Dating Violence

A teacher listens in disbelief and horror as one of her students describes how her boyfriend held a gun to her head until she agreed to have sex with him. Her parents discovered the severity of the relationship when she went to the emergency room for a broken arm. She and her family left the state out of fear for her life.

Another student tells of how her boyfriend pushed her head into the brick wall of the school as they were walking to the parking lot, while having an argument.

Another student tells of how her boyfriend would expect her to wait at home for his phone calls. If she wasn't there, he became verbally and emotionally abusive.

Each of these scenarios is an example of the pervasiveness of abuse and control in teenage dating relationships. It has been estimated that one out of three teenage girls will be involved in an abusive relationship or experience violence in their relationships (Levy, 1991a). A figure related to sexual exploitation is that 35% of men, across seven studies, indicated that they would rape if they thought they could get away with it (Bateman, 1991; and Lloyd, 1991). The problem of abuse in relationships needs to be addressed in the teen dating years, as the dating period is a time of socialization, for establishing marital roles, which may include violence towards the spouse as a way to resolve conflict (Burcky, Reuterman, and Kopsky, 1988). According to Rue (1989), abuse during the dating years is a virtual guarantee of later abuse. Teens should be aware of what an abusive

relationship is and how to avoid one. However, teachers, parents, counselors,and others who are involved in working with teens may be confused and frustrated at how to identify and/or help teens who may be involved in abusive dating relationships. The purpose of this paper is to review the literature on dating violence and abusive dating relationships in an effort to determine what defines an abusive relationship, to identify factors associated with dating violence, and to suggest methods and techniques for successful intervention and preventive education.

Review of Literature

Definition and Types of Abuse

A number of definitions of dating violence have been determined. Stets and Henderson (1991) wrote that physical aggression is "synonymous with the term 'violence' as used in family violence research" (p. 29). Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) reported the definition of violence as "the use or threat of physical force or restraint carried out with the intent of causing pain or injury to another" (p. 4). They related this definition to dating violence by saying "any acts and/or threat of acts that physically or verbally abuse another (person and that occur during any social interaction related to the dating and/or mate selection process" (Sugarman and Hotaling, 1991, p. 101). Levy (1991a) offered this definition: " a pattern of repeated actual or threatened acts that physically, verbally, or sexually abuse a member of an unmarried heterosexual or homosexual couple in which one or both partners is between thirteen and twenty years old" (p. 4). A slightly different slant was given by Rue (1989): "abuse is the

intentional use of physical, verbal, or emotional force or attack to control and maintain power over another person by frightening and intimidating her" (p. 17).

Disagreements and conflict are experienced by a large number of people in dating relationships. Over 95% of college students sampled had experienced conflict in a dating relationship (O'Leary & Riggs, 1989). But, while conflict is a natural part of every relationship, when the inevitable conflict causes acts of aggression that are designed to hurt, control, and dominate another person, that's abuse (Rue, 1989).

The Family Crisis Shelter (1987) identified and defined four types of abuse, which included: physical: actions which cause pain or injury; emotional: actions which cause loss of self-esteem; psychological: actions which create fear; and sexual: actions of a sexual nature which cause fear, loss of self-esteem, or pain or injury (p. 16).

Taking it a step further, Rue (1989) expands upon these definitions by stating that a person who receives any of the following kinds of treatment in a relationship is emotionally (or psychologically) abused:

* threats of physical violence, verbal as well as through shaking fists, sudden movements, a menacing look in the eyes, or a cruel tone of voice;
* unjust and continual accusations of having an affair with someone else or flirting with other people;
* public humiliation;
* derogatory name-calling and the use of obscenity;

* continual ignoring or denial of one's feelings, thoughts, or needs in the relationship;
* constant criticism and verbal put-downs ('you're fat, ugly, or sexually undesirable,' 'it's your fault,' 'you're a failure');
* forced isolation from family and friends;
* abandonment in dangerous places;
* destruction of valued property or cruelty to pets);
* betrayal of intimacy (laughing at expressions of affection, discussing or putting down certain sexual behavior in front of other people, 'You kiss like a frog.')

(p. 21)

Rue (1989) states "these behaviors are abusive simply because they can destroy one of a person's most valuable assets -- her self-esteem. Chances are that if the couple continue to see each other, verbal and mental abuse will escalate to physical abuse" (p. 21). According to Gamache (1991), "the insults and mind games that play a major part in battering seem intended to destroy the victim's independence and self-esteem so that she will comply with demands and feel she has no other options besides this relationship." (p. 75). A violent relationship usually begins to be violent with emotional abuse.

According to Rue (1989), acts of physical violence can range from minor to severe. Rue (1989) described minor and major physical abuse as follows:

* a playful punch, done intentionally, that hurts;

* a session of excessive tickling that goes on, even after she asks seriously that it stop;
* a pinch on the arm;
* a smack on the rear;
* a yank on a handful of hair;
* a slap in the face;

As physical violence escalates towards the more severe, it includes:

* punching, kicking, biting, stomping;
* severe shaking;
* throwing dangerous objects with the intent to connect;
* pushing or throwing someone across a room or down stairs;
* twisting or breaking arms;
* burning from irons, cigarettes, coffee;
* choking, beating;
* stabbing, shooting (p. 24).

Sexual abuse is not just date rape. Sex that causes a person to feel hurt or degraded or worthless or ashamed is abusive (Rue, 1989). Some examples of this kind of abuse are: a boy who will not take no for an answer; a boy who threatens as a means of forcing a girl into sex ("I'll leave you"); a boy who uses insults to get his way sexually ("You think you're too good"); and a boy who manipulates ("If you love me, you'll do it") (Rue, 1989).

Prevalence and Societal Acceptance of Abuse

Burcky, Reuterman, and Kopsky (1988) reported that according to their findings the incidence of dating violence is surprisingly prevalent. They surveyed 123 high school students and discovered that almost 40% of those dating had experienced some form of violence in the relationship. Similar findings were reported by O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew (1986), as 35.5% of the students in their sample reported they had been victims of abuse in a dating relationship. They continued to say that on-going research, exposure to the literature, and statistics are refuting the idea that teen dating violence is unusual or infrequent and should dispel the myth that only "adult relationships are violent.

Rue (1989) defined a battered woman as "one who is the victim of repeated physical or emotional abuse or both by her husband, ex-husband, or boyfriend, or lover who is jealous and controlling and uses threats and verbal abuse as well as physical violence to dominate her" (p. 17-18). Battering is the number one cause of injury to women (Family Crisis Shelter, 1987) and statistics estimate that in the United States, a woman is battered by her husband or boyfriend every 18 seconds (Rue, 1989). Kutner (1991) estimates that as many as thirty to forty percent of teenage girls have been hit in the course of dating.

Many writers and researchers (Callahan, 1991; Follingstad, 1991; Gamache, 1991; Greene and Chadwick, 1991; Lloyd, 1991; NiCarthy, 1991; Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989; and Rue, 1989) attributed part of the problem to society and the socialization of men and women . According to Gamache (1991), violence is reinforced by cultural beliefs that encourage

its occurrence and these patterns are so pervasive that it appears normal and natural for some people to dominate and for others to be subordinate...to create a hierarchy of power in human relationships. This cultural context may explain how some men come to believe that violence against their partners will be supported or at least tolerated.

The socialization of women emphasizes female responsibility for the maintenance of the relationship and the importance of relationships to women (Lloyd, 1991; Greene and Chadwick, 1991; and NiCarthy, 1991). These beliefs ultimately support the theme of male control and female dependence (Lloyd,1991). Greene and Chadwick (1991) also discuss this theme, saying that the social message to women is that women have the primary responsibility to nurture and maintain relationship; the value of a woman is measured by her ability to establish and maintain a relationship - even an abusive one and even at at great personal cost; and that men have the right to treat their partners any way they wish.

In a similar vein, NiCarthy (1991) stated that women, even more than men, have been socialized to believe they cannot have a full life without one special partner. She further noted that numerous societal forces come together to encourage women in a dependent or addictive love, long before they are of the age to commit to a man. She believes a couple is in serious trouble if one or both believe they can't survive without the other.

The themes of courtship and romance also are threaded throughout media portrayals and stereotypes that influence particular individuals to varying degrees (Lloyd,1991). It is her contention that the greater emphasis on these themes as "the way love should be" creates the greater potential

for aggressive and exploitative behavior, while at the same time allows partners to downplay, forgive, or overlook negative behavior. She reports it allows the partners to believe that negative courtship will disappear over time or be conquered by love and it encourages couples to stay together despite extremely negative interaction patterns.

The more accepting view of violence that some men hold also appears to be related to the socialization process. According to Sugarman and Hotaling (1989), while the causal relationship between attitudes and behavior is not clear, "the research seems to assume that these attitudes are a function of socialization processes that teach men it is permissible to control women through the use of violence" (p. 15). Follingstad (1991) reported that societal acceptance of the use of violence was an important determinant for the male subjects to engage in violence.

Teenagers, influenced by the sexist and violent messages from TV and society, generally accept abusive behaviors (Callahan, 1991). According to Rue (1989), TV shows, movies, radio, magazine ads and videos say that men are supposed to be tough (to dominate and control) and women are supposed to be soft (to be passive), which is an indication of society's acceptance and expectations of violence.

Factors Associated with Dating Violence

Several factors have been associated with abusive relationships. It is important to note that these factors are not necessarily the cause of violence.

Violence in the Family of Origin. The first association factor is having witnessed or having been a victim of abuse in the family of origin. Gwartney-Gibbs, Stockard, and Bohmer (1987), and Stets and Pirog-Good (1988), reported that several studies noted a positive relationship between sustaining or observing aggression as child in the family of origin and sustaining or inflicting violence while dating. They continued to say that the likelihood of male students inflicting aggression is positively and significantly linked to having witnessed parents engage in aggressive interaction. Individuals are more likely to accept or engage in aggressive behavior when they have close frequent contact with others who accept or engage in such behavior (Gwartney-Gibbs, Stockard, and Bohmer, 1987).

According to the Family Crisis Shelter (1987), children raised in homes in which they witness violent behavior between parents or who are victims of violence directed at them, are at much greater risk of becoming either an abuser themselves or unconsciously repeating their victim status in other relationships. According to the shelter, if the child sees the mother being assaulted by the father on a frequent basis, and through a combination of fear, threat and actual violence, the child's mother is forced to concede to a father's demands, the child learns to try-out these same violent problem-solving methods on siblings or peers. Similarly, if the child is the victim of frequent abuse by a parent, the child soon realizes that power, brute-strength, physically superior size, and control, are effective methods of problem-solving in the future. When a child views an adult react to familial, financial, vocational, or social stresses by erupting into violence, to the child, that violence becomes an acceptable

way to react to the same pressures as he or she grows into adolescence and adulthood (Family Crisis Shelter, 1987). This intergenerational learned behavior was also cited by Flynn (1987). It is through this process of learning, that violence is passed on from generation to generation (Family Crisis Shelter, 1989).

Sugarman and Hotaling (1991), however, indicated there was conflicting data with regards to viewing or experiencing battering in the home and becoming an abuser. They reported that while violence in the family of origin has been consistently associated with husband to wife abuse, the literature on dating violence is less consistent. With regards to experiencing violence as a child, they cited seven studies that reported a positive relationship and five others that noted no significant connection. They went on to report that the "non-significant findings appear to be even more common when examining the impact of witnessing violence in one's family of origin:" (p. 112) four studies supported the belief, seven didn't. Lloyd, Koval, and Cate (1989) also reported a study that "found only a weak association between the cycle of family violence and being in a conflictual-violent relationship." (p. 136).

Alcohol Use. O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew (1991) noted in their study the consumption of alcohol was a factor in the incidence of dating violence approximately 40% of the time. Burcky, Reuterman, and Kopsky (1988) reported alcohol involvement in one-third of violent incidents. Other data collected by Stets and Henderson (1991), and Riggs and O'Leary (1987) showed increased alcohol consumption prior to or during

an argument will increase the likelihood that physical aggression will occur.

Despite the high association found by O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew (1991), they state "although frequently correlated, the cause and effect relationship of alcohol usage and violence between intimates has not been substantiated." (p. 467) Additionally, Billingham and Henningson (1988) noted that "while alcohol may be a contributing factor, it appears that there are more important factors which out weigh alcohol use or abuse. It is certainly not the dominant force in dating violence" (p.99).

Low Self-Esteem. Low self-esteem is another factor that has been linked to dating aggression. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) stated that individuals who had experienced dating violence had lower self-esteem than those who did not. Stets and Pirog-Good (1988) suggest low self-esteem influences violence in that people act to control others in an effort to raise their own self-esteem. Sugarman and Hotaling (1991) reported a connection between low self-esteem and 'assaulted individuals, but reported no relationship between battering behavior and low-self-esteem.

While the studies previously mentioned report a connection to low self-esteem and aggression, Bird, Stith, and Schladale (1991) state that the empirical evidence is inconsistent concerning the importance of self-esteem. They maintain that some researchers conclude that low self-esteem increases the probability of experiencing dating violence and in contrast, while others say it is not a determinant. In any case, they suggest that further study of self-esteem as a factor is needed.

Seriousness of Relationship. Stets and Pirog-Good (1988), and Flynn (1987), report that the more serious relationships have higher rates of violence than casual relationships. This could be due to the fact that as relationships become more intimate, they become more private. In one study by Burcky, Reuterman, and Kopsky (1988), 45% of the abusive relationships were defined as steady dating. They concluded that the more a relationship builds, the greater the possibility for a person to experience violence in that relationship. Kutner (1991) reported that while most hitting occurs in long-term relationships, most parents of abused children rarely know it occurs unless there are visible bruises.

Control. Stets and Pirog-Good (1988) stated that control is an extremely important interactive feature predicting dating violence. Control was defined "as the process whereby individuals get others to behave according to their own will. It is a strategy for maintaining power, authority, or dominance over another in face to face interaction" (Stets and Pirog-Good, 1988, p. 2). Lloyd (1991) contended there is a wide variety of support for the idea that the male uses violence as means of maintaining control. She also noted that women who experienced on-going violence in a relationship, often identified control and domination as reasons for their partners' abuse. These women indicated that their partners made attempts to control them through accusations of infidelity, jealousy, and monitoring their activities.

Anger, Jealousy and Confusion. Anger, jealousy, and confusion also were identified as contributing factors (or interpretations of) dating violence by Levy, 1991a; Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989; Follingstad , Lloyd

& Sebastian, 1991; and Henton, Cate, Koval, and Lloyd, 1983. Victims thought getting control and reacting out of jealousy played important roles in the use of force in a dating relationship, while both victims and perpetrators thought that expressing anger and retaliation for an emotional hurt were important and frequent motivations (Follingstad, Lloyd, & Sebastian, 1991).

Between one-fourth to one-third of males reported, in a study done by Sugarman and Hotaling (1989), that the primary cause of their violence was to force or intimidate the other person to "give me something," and between one-fourth to one-third of the victims interpreted the violence on the part of their partner as love. They maintain that the belief that violence as a sign of love points to the normative confusion that surrounds dating violence. Flynn's (1987) survey also discovered 29% of the respondents interpreted the violent behaviors as love. The idea that this might be the reason why some individuals stay in a relationship that includes violence was suggested by Billingham and Henningson (1988).

Sex-Role Attitudes. "Studies have shown a relationship between sex role expectations and abuse. Persons involved in violent relationships often embrace traditional sex-role stereotypes" (Family Crisis Shelter, 1987, p.16). Abusive men were seen as being more masculine sex-typed than their non-violent counterparts (Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989). Bernard and Bernard (1985) also reported that the more masculine sex-typed the male is, the more likely he is to respond with aggressive or abusive behavior when he feels threatened by his partner.

The information regarding female sex roles was ambiguous. Bernard, Bernard, and Bernard (1985) found that the likely targets of abuse were not only women who endorsed feminine characteristics, but also the women who displayed the characteristics our culture sees as traditionally masculine, that is, women who are self-sufficient, assertive, and competitive. Their belief was that the women who display these "less feminine" traits to the men who are sex-typed as masculine, may threaten the men, who see these traits as their "rightful prerogative." Rue (1989) carried this concept a bit further by saying, "Today's boys don't seem to realize that today's girls don't take orders too well. The boy starts making demands, the aggressive girl tells him to knock it off, and pretty soon they're duking it out right on campus" (p. 11).

The idea of the less tractable woman being a victim was also supported by Sugarman and Hotaling (1989), who found that women who hold more liberal sex role attitudes were more likely to define themselves as being victims (or offenders) in a violent relationship. However, the associations between violent behavior and a number of factors presumed to be significant influences still remain cloudy, a fact that is disturbing to Sugarman and Hotaling (1991).

The Reciprocal Nature of Abuse

Studies indicated that most courtship violence was widely reported as mutual, in that females report inflicting it at least as much as males (Billingham and Henningson, 1988; Makepeace, 1987; Flynn, 1987, Family Crisis Shelter, 1987; Rue, 1989; Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, and Sebastian,

1991; Gamache, 1991; and O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew, 1986). Mutuality figures ranging from 49% to 71% were reported by Flynn (1987), and O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew (1986). Based on past research, it is expected that young women will be as verbally and physically aggressive as young men. But, while teen women may be as aggressive as teen men, it is a more significant problem for the female simply because of the greater size and strength of men, which means that they can do more serious injury (Family Crisis Shelter, 1987; and O'Keefe, Brockopp, & Chew, 1987). According to Gamache (1991), a slap or punch delivered by an adolescent male usually has a greater physical and emotional effect on his partner rather than the reverse. Many researchers (Stets and Henderson, 1991; Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd and Sebastian, 1991; and Gamache, 1991) report that female victims experience more severe physical, emotional, and sexual injury than do male victims.

Billingham and Henningson (1988), and Flynn (1987) report that while both partners use violence, generally males use more violent or severe forms of aggression than females and, therefore, are more likely to be seen as victimizers. This phenomenon was also noted by Makepeace (1986): "Males more often sustained lower level violence (thrown objects, pushing, slapping) while females sustained higher levels of violence (struck with an object, beaten-up)" (p. 384).

While males and females use aggression almost equally, the reasons for the violence differs. Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, and Sebastian (1991) found females were more likely to believe they were acting in self-defense or intended to hurt their partner, whereas the males were more likely

trying to intimidate their partner. Makepeace (1986) suggested a possible explanation of the females intent to cause harm to their partners stems simply from the necessity of self-defense.

Stets and Pirog-Good (1988) explained that those who inflict violence to control others also may be more likely to sustain violence for two reasons. First, those who resist control may inflict violence to stop the other from controlling them (in a sense they are using violence to obtain control of their own). Secondly, those who resist control may inflict violence in order to protect and defend themselves from the violence they have sustained. In either case, this supports the idea that reciprocity of violence that has been identified by other research (Bateman,1991; Billingham and Henningson, 1988; Burke, Stets, and Pirog-Good, 1989; Flynn, 1987; Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd, and Sebastian, 1991; Gamache, 1991; Lloyd, 1991; Makepeace, 1983, 1986, and 1987; NiCarthy, 1991; O'Keefe, Brockop, and Chew, 1986; Riggs and O'Leary, 1989; Stets and Henderson, 1991; and Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989, 1991).

Follingstad, Wright, Lloyd and Sebastian (1991) believe that more investigation in terms of how victims and perpetrators are defined is necessary in order to better understand the differences in the male and female victim.

Who Victims Tell

A study by Stets and Pirog-Good (1989) revealed that physical and sexual abuse in dating relationships is grossly underreported. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) reported that dating partners rarely seek professional help: on the average about 4% seek the help of a teacher or counselor or

some other official. A large proportion do talk to someone about the violent episodes: a majority talk to friends, while 20-40% talk to family members, and more females than males talk to someone about dating violence (Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989).

The findings by Burcky, Reuterman, and Kopsky (1988) were similar to those of Billingham and Henningson (1988) in that 66% told close friends, 20-23 % told no one, 8-16% told parents; 2-6% told teachers or counselors, and 2% told law enforcement officials.

Implications.

Lloyd, Koval, and Cate, 1989; and Flynn (1987) believe that because courtship violence may lead to premarital violence, early identification of the problem and intervention are likely to reduce the chance that violence may carry over into marriage.

Intervention

Barrie Levy (1991b) believes a valuable tool in helping victims of abuse is support groups. It is her belief that the disclosure of abuse that takes place in groups is powerful, cathartic, and often the beginning of change. According to Levy (1991), these groups allow young women in different stages of abusive relationships to help one another because teens respond better to confrontation of denial from peers than from adults. Model support groups in place throughout the United States have several features in common:

1) they use an educational, topic-focused format, often with a planned curriculum;

2) they encourage group members to contact one another outside of group meetings, if necessary;

3) they require the role of a professional (or leader) to facilitate, educate, and provide resources, NOT to analyze, interpret unconscious motivation or encourage members' dependence on the leader. (Levy, 1991b, p.233)

Education for Prevention .

According to Makepeace (1986), "...education may be the best hope for alleviating courtship violence" (p. 387). And because once aggression becomes established it appears difficult to unlearn, educational programs must be started early (Makepeace, 1986). In fact, the Minnesota School Curriculum Project, as described by Jones (1991), has two phases to their program. The first phase is directed at junior and senior high school students, while the second phase targets preschool and elementary students. Makepeace (1986) believes if youth are educated about courtship violence during the premarital years, they might be more able to recognize it, feel less isolated, and be more willing to seek help when it occurs. It is the belief of the Family Crisis Shelter (1987), that "prevention is more cost effective than responding to the problem after it exists, both the terms of dollars and in terms of human suffering" (p. 1). Lloyd (1991) also recommended the best way to address the problem is to do so before it occurs.

Given the reciprocal nature of aggression, for intervention and prevention to be successful, men, as well as women, need to be educated as to what constitutes abuse (Stets and Pirog-Good, 1989). The following were emphasized for inclusion in an education program: non-violent means of resolving interpersonal conflict; the importance of withdrawing from a conflict that is getting out of control; dealing with issues of jealousy and rejection; decreasing tolerance for the use of physical force; reducing anger and promote appropriate expressions of anger (for both male and female students); skills for non-violent problem-solving; dealing with alcohol and drugs in dating relationships; understanding sexual signals and communication; coping with stress; and improving overall communication skills (Billingham, 1987; Family Crisis Shelter, 1987; Flynn, 1987; Lloyd, Koval, and Cate, 1989; Lloyd, 1991; Riggs and O'Leary, 1989; Roscoe and Callahan, 1985; Stets and Henderson, 1991; and Sugarman and Hotaling, 1989).

Riggs and O'Leary (1989) reported that there is some evidence that individuals with better problem-solving abilities report less dating aggression. In addition, they believe conflicts that do arise are likely to be solved in more appropriate ways than by the use of physical aggression and that good communication also should reduce the amount and severity of conflict within the couple.

Flynn (1987) recommended educators inform students of how society's accepting attitudes towards violence among couples contribute to its occurrence. Lloyd (1991) suggested education on male-female relationships might emphasize the different themes of courtship for men and women,

increase empathy and understanding between the sexes, decrease adversarial attitudes and stereotypes, and ultimately change the nature of male-female relationships.

Roscoe and Callahan (1985) described four needs for schools with regard to this issue:

1) professionals working with teens need to be aware of its occurrence and make, themselves available as support system

2) teens need to be taught how to interact with their partners in non-violent ways

3) teens need to be taught that violence is not a normal part of relationships

4) adults working with teens must model styles of non-violent behavior. (p. 552)

Sousa (1991) described the Dating Violence Intervention Program (DVIP), which was designed to reach teens. It was begun by Transition House, a shelter for battered women, and Emerge, a program for men who batter. When setting up the program, teens were interviewed to determine what would be most effective. Four goals emerged for the program:

1) to provide prevention education on teen dating violence, drawing from life experiences of teenagers;

2) to impact the culture of the schools by developing a comprehensive curriculum that, could be applied throughout the school;

3) to change student and teacher attitudes so that male violence against women becomes a recognizable problem and stigma

within the school; and

4) to empower and train teenagers to talk to other teenagers and younger students about, dating violence. (Sousa, 1991, p.224)

The program was begun at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School, Cambridge, Massachusetts. It was initiated with a Teen Violence Awareness Week, which included workshops, an assembly, and an in-service training for personnel. In its second year a curriculum was added. The curriculum covered five major questions:

1) What is abuse?

2) Who has the power?

3) What societal messages do we get on how men and women are supposed to act in relationships and how can these messages lead to violence?

4) What does an abusive relationship look like? and

5) What can we do about preventing abuse?

(Sousa, 1991, pp. 226-227)

Conclusion

It has been estimated that one out of three teenage girls will be involved in an abusive relationship or experience violence in their relationships (Levy, 1991a). Given the fact that studies are showing higher incidence of dating violence reported among teens, the importance and usefulness of this topic for anyone who works with adolescents cannot be understated. School personnel (teachers, counselors, and administrators)

can play an important part in intervening and preventing dating violence (Powell, 1991). According to O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew (1986), educational professionals have a responsibility to be informed and to be ready to take an active role as they believe that schools must study this social issue as "they can play an important role in breaking the cycle of violence" (p. 468). It is within the schools that students have the greatest opportunity to be exposed to alternative relationships and where they have access to support services (O'Keefe, Brockopp, and Chew, 1986). Incorporating dating violence into the discussion when it surfaces in the classroom, building it into the curriculum, facilitating student awareness and support systems, promoting parental and community awareness and involvement; and cultivating and using an integrated curriculum are methods of becoming involved and helping students learn about healthy relationships (Billingham and Henningson, 1988).

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